



COVID-19 CONSUMER RESOURCE CENTER

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott issued a Declaration of State of Disaster for all counties in Texas due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Office of Public Utility Counsel is working hard to ensure that the public has all necessary information related to the novel Coronavirus.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Electricity, Water and Wastewater Service

On March 26, 2020, the **Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT)** responded to Governor Abbott's Declaration of State of Disaster for all counties in Texas with a series of measures intended to address the impact of COVID-19-related financial hardship on residential consumers in Texas.

Please see the [PUCT's Orders](#) and FAQ sheet for more detailed information:

<http://www.puc.texas.gov/images/facts/PUCTX-COVID19-FAQ-FAQ.pdf> (ENGLISH)

<http://espanol.puc.texas.gov/consumer/facts/PUCTX-COVID19-FAQ-esp.pdf> (SPANISH)

Below is a summary of the assistance that the PUCT's orders provide residential consumers:

- In areas of the state that are open to retail electric competition, residential consumers who are experiencing COVID-19-related financial hardship should contact their Retail Electric Provider to request a deferred payment plan.
- The PUCT has created a **COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program** under which eligible residential customers who are experiencing COVID-19-related financial hardship and qualify for unemployment at the TWC may contact the state's Low Income List Administrator (LILA) at **866-454-8387** to request enrollment. The LILA call center is open 24/7. After providing LILA with proof of unemployment from TWC and other required information within 30 days of calling LILA, a residential customer will be added to a list under which their Retail Electric Provider cannot disconnect their electricity service for non-payment for up to six months.
- In areas of the state that are not open to retail electric competition, integrated electric utilities, such as El Paso Electric, Southwestern Public Service, Southwestern Electric Power Company and Entergy Texas, cannot disconnect residential customers for non-payment at this time.
- If residential consumers receive electricity service from an electric cooperative or municipally owned utility, such as Austin Energy in Austin or CPS Energy in San Antonio, they should contact them directly to request information about any COVID-19-related assistance that they may be offering residential consumers. These entities are largely outside of the PUCT's jurisdiction.
- Water and wastewater utilities that are regulated by the PUCT cannot disconnect residential customers for non-payment at this time.

Working with the PUCT, the Office of Public Utility Counsel is strongly committed to helping eligible residential customers who are experiencing COVID-19-related financial hardship maintain their electricity, water and wastewater service during the COVID-19 crisis

Other Financial Assistance

211 helps Texans find financial assistance to pay for housing and other essential services. This helpful resource also provides a COVID-19 screening tool that you can download if you or someone you are caring for experiences symptoms. Simply dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org/services/covid19.

Unemployment Benefits

The ***Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)*** is dedicated to protecting the health and well-being of employers, employees, and communities in Texas. TWC is working to address the uncertainty that Texans may be experiencing as a result of COVID-19 and is working with federal, state and local officials and agencies to provide financial assistance during the COVID-19 crisis. For more information on how to sign up for unemployment and other available assistance, please visit:

<https://www.twc.texas.gov/news/covid-19-resources-job-seekers>

GOVERNOR'S EXECUTIVE ORDERS IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In accordance with federal guidelines issued by President Donald J. Trump and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Governor Abbott has issued several Executive Orders in response to the spread of COVID-19 in Texas. For the latest updates, please visit:

<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-executive-orders-in-accordance-with-federal-guidelines-to-mitigate-spread-of-covid-19-in-texas>

In issuing Executive Orders, Governor Abbott states that "[t]he State of Texas is at a pivotal moment in our response to COVID-19, and it is imperative that we act now on preemptive measures to slow the spread of this virus."

KEY STATE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES RESPONDING TO COVID-19

The ***Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS)*** is dedicated to promoting health and safety best practices and prevention tips to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Texas, as well as tracking confirmed COVID-19 cases, testing and fatalities in each of our state's 254 counties. For the latest updates, please visit: www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus.

The ***Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM)*** coordinates our state's emergency management program, which is intended to ensure that our state and local governments respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters and implement plans and programs to help prevent or lessen the impact of emergencies and disasters. For the latest updates on our state's disaster declarations, financial assistance available for small businesses and other public assistance available for emergency protective measures, please visit: <https://tdem.texas.gov/covid-19/>.